THE INDIVIDUAL LIFE CYCLE

By MAY MANDELBAUM

THE LIFE CYCLE

851 A baby born among the Sinkaietk had no real social position. His mother remained
852 in seclusion in the special lodge in which she had given birth to him, and none but women touched him. After some days he was brought forth to be welcomed and blessed by the community, represented on this occasion by a small group of the old people. Then, strapped on his cradle board, he accompanied his mother as she resumed her routine tasks. Not until he was a year or more old was he given real social status. Then a feast was
[553] held in his honor and he was given one of the family ancestral names.

855 For a few years his life was very easy. He was trained to keep out of danger, and to respond politely to adults and their requests, but he had no responsibilities and few duties, and was free to spend most of his time in play with the other children of the village.

857 As he grew older he was made to assume further duties, and a somewhat more formal
861 education was begun. The boy learned to hunt and to fight; the girl assisted in root-digging and berry-picking. In the evening the children heard the folk tales, and the moral lectures given particularly for them by the old people. From the major part of
[881] the religious life they were definitely excluded until the series of rites which took place at puberty.

883 After puberty, childish pursuits abandoned, the adolescent spent his time learning techniques and preparing to take on
885 adult functions. After some years spent thus it was time for marriage, which was rather
[591] unceremonious. Then the couple went to live at either parental home. Life continued in much the same fashion as before, the boy sharing the masculine pursuits of the group,
[843] the girl busy with food-getting and cooking. The wife's pregnancy placed herself and her husband under many restrictions and tabus for the sake of the child, but a short time after its birth the old routine was reestablished.

554 When "powers" for special aptitudes came back to the adult at the winter dance, social differentiation for the individual really began. This brought about some differences in position, which meant, however, only purely individual prestige.

888 With increasing age came change in po-
761 sition, less active roles being played by the elders. Finally came desertion or loss of the spirit guardian, and with it, death.

783 man's luck and power: her pollution would be permanent. Sometimes hot rocks covered with
841 green grass on which to lie were put in a pit in the menstrual lodge as a substitute for the customary sweat bath. They were not allowed to take back to the village the
[296] clothes they wore during this time. These were cleaned with diatomaceous earth and left in the lodge. Fresh ones were brought them by girls to don after a sweat bath and a bath in the river, taken before returning
841 to their ordinary life. They were not allowed to cook, even for themselves. Food was brought to them from the village, and none of it might be left till the next day or brought back to the village. Anything but bloody meat and fresh salmon might be eaten, and possibly the first of the camas or berry crop. They were not supposed to drink directly from a stream, lest it dry up. The drinking tubes used were made by pushing the pith out of an elderberry shoot. They should not comb their hair during the period, but could scratch the head with their fingers. Women in their periods could not help men in any way, nor would men look at or talk to them. Should a man eat anything cooked by them, he would sicken, lose his power, and game would flee from him. While a woman with a small baby might take it to the lodge with her, older children were left in charge of the husband or some relative or neighbor. At the lodge a woman busied herself with making mats, sacks, etc., which she was free to use later in the household.

Women who did not menstruate were free from these restrictions. They were said to be fairly common, but this may mean merely that slight menstruation is not noticed and considered. [These women were said not to have children. - L.S.] Those whose periods were of excessive length took each month a drug, unknown to the informant.

881 When the period of seclusion for adolescent boys and girls was over they returned to the village in a very unceremonious fashion. The return was unheralded and uncelebrated. If a boy changed his name at this time there might be a feast, but it would be on account of the name. The adolescent returned, no longer a child nor given to the things of childhood, but an adult ready to take his place in the adult scheme of things

881 After the return from seclusion the
• 883 boys accompanied the men on their hunting trips, and assisted in all the manly pursuits. The first kill of a deer (and of a
[E 24] bear, said Cecile) made by the boy was welcomed by the community and ceremoniously treated. He himself did not eat of it, but all the old men did (or at least he did not eat until the old men had partaken). This was for the sake of his future luck in the hunt. At this time the lad was in the neighborhood of eighteen or twenty. The girls stayed at home, going abroad only when chaperoned by some older female relative, except early in the morning before the boys were up when they went to sweat, swim, and get the water for cooking. They were supposed to swim every day. They became acquainted with

881 They ½ became acquainted with
883 the more specialized techniques, such as bas-
836 ketry, and were supposed to have no contacts with men except for fleeting ones at group affairs. Actually, however, many of the maidens succeeded in eluding the vigilance of their elders, and a virgin bride was considered unusual and rather highly valued.

½ [i.e., post-adolescent girls.-- Analyst]

MARRIAGE

Prohibited Degrees

582 No marriage to a blood relative was al-
835 lowed. Theoretically this prohibition extended even to sixth cousins. A breach of tabu towards so distant a relative would be considered rather wrong by the older people, but would not have been very severely censured. Actually, many second cousins did marry. According to Johnnie, it was preferable to marry "a daughter of a man who had married one's grandmother's sister," or a relative similarly removed, than to marry an utter stranger. The marriage of close relatives was a disgrace, but our informants agreed that even in this case, after the lapse of some time, the offense was forgiven or at least forgotten, and the couple received once more into the community's good graces. It was believed that the children of tabu degree relatives would be deformed, stupid, or physically weak.

The idea of tabu included not only sexual relations, but also any sort of intimate trifling contact, such as tickling. This held not only between cousins, but also brothers and sisters.

684 Incest was exceedingly rare, according
835 to Cecile, who stated that it never occured between parent and child. On rare occasions a brother and sister, usually quite young, might have incestuous relations. In this event the parents would be so horrified that both children would be killed. This happens
[538] often in the myths, and always the parents are so ashamed that they put an end to the offenders, or at least to the boy. The girl, particularly if there was a child, was sometimes allowed to live. Such a pattern in the mythology generally means that the tabu was felt rather strongly.

582 The technical ban on marriage referred
835 to cousins of any degree. They were apparently grouped with the siblings, whose relationship terms they shared. "The older people considered the cousins as their children, and children should not marry." More distant collateral relatives, or those merely connected by marriage, were known as snaqsi'lūx. These were held to be most desirable as mates, and were preferred to total strangers, we were told. We found no check of this in the marriages.

Betrothal

582 It was preferred to marry within the
554 tribe, but marriages outside of it took
778 place. Rich and poor married quite freely, for there was always the notion that a man was poor only because he lacked power.

778 424 sang his own power song, and "fed" it by giving food away. If it asked for all his possessions, he would have to obey in order to master it. A sick man who found power in a dream would let it go, not deeming himself strong enough to bring it under control.

Evil shamans might appropriate the power of a dying patient whom they were ostensibly trying to cure, and if they knew that someone with a desirable guardian spirit was about to die, they would send their own power to steal it.

778 796 789 Those attending the winter dance, especially the young neophytes, stood in danger of having their power stolen by malignant shamans who were there. The latter sometimes banded together to do this, and if one of them succeeded, the power remained his and the victim soon died. Suszen emphasized this phase of the winter assemblies, and said that the chiefs prohibited power contests at the dances because they were so often fatal.

778 Only Lucy Joe denied that one shaman could steal another's power while the latter was asleep and that power conflicts took place at the winter ceremonies. She said that a person who had some power might hang up a bright blanket to attract more. If he saw a bird perching on the blanket he recognized that an additional guardian spirit had come to him. This was not confirmed by other informants.

778 791 Cecile told the following anecdote of power theft. Once when a shaman seemed unable to cure a woman suffering from papaɪ̈ôt, her family called in four other shamans to assist him. This made him jealous. He said to the others, "You four fellows work first and I will be the last." He went aside and sat by himself till they had done all they could for the patient. When he returned to her he not only extracted the papaɪ̈ôt but stole her own power also. The patient's brothers, being informed of this foul act by the other four shamans, held a knife to his throat and made him drink poison. He ran out of the house in convulsions and tried, since he had fish power, to reach the creek, but died before he got there, so that his power could not help him. The woman whose power he had stolen died also.

778 883 763 When one became senile he failed to hear his power song and to receive messages from his guardian spirits in dreams. Friendly shamans might try to find his lost power for him by looking under the water, in the mountains, and elsewhere, by a kind of clairvoyance, but sometimes they met with no success. This meant that before long he would die. Suszen explained that power abandoned very old people because they were too feeble to fulfill its commands as imparted to them in dreams. It could in no wise be induced to remain with them.

778 424 Husbands and wives did not bequeath their power to each other. Indeed, it is